

of their previous softness, they are more easily worked; while their subsequent hardness insures the greater durability of the building in which they are employed. And, again, though many varieties of stone are so easily worked, even after a long exposure to the air, as to have acquired in consequence the name of *freestone*; yet even with respect to such as are of the hardest and toughest quality, an equal degree of ease in working them is easily attainable by practice. To an unpractised workman, for instance, nothing is more difficult than to give a determinate form, by the hammer or chisel, to granite, slate, or flint; and yet a little experience enables the mason to work all these to the greatest nicety: and that person would indeed be very incurious, who, although he might not naturally be disposed to notice mechanical processes, did not feel an interest in observing the form which the roofing-slate takes under the bill of the slater; or the ease with which the gun-flint is formed into its peculiar shape by a few strokes of a light hammer.

But, after the stones have been detached from the quarry, and have been worked into a convenient form for building, it is in the greater number of instances necessary to the stability of the intended structure, that they should be consolidated together by some intermediate substance: for it would very rarely happen that the